

requested that the objection to the drawings therefore be withdrawn.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Kawasuji (U.S. Patent 6,188,144). The Examiner refers to column 12, lines 4-15 of the cited patent as teaching applicants' claim. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

With reference to applicants' Fig. 1 and the description in the specification (from page 8, line 26, to page 9, line 9), the gist of the invention of this application (hereinafter referred to as "the present invention") is that "the laser gas is continuously excited even during at least one half-cycle subsequent to the first half-cycle of the oscillating current to sustain the laser oscillating operation". Thus, a longer pulse width is achieved.

The Examiner asserts that it is stated in the cited Kawasuji reference that "a laser oscillating operation is performed by a first half-cycle of a discharge oscillation current waveform of one pulse in which polarity is reversed".

However, such a statement is not found in column 12, lines 4-15, of Kawasuji. The portion of Kawasuji indicated by the Examiner merely describes the circuit operation of C1, C2, SL1 and SL2.

In the present invention, a laser oscillating operation is not performed only by a first half-cycle of a discharge oscillation current waveform of one pulse in which polarity is reversed, but performed by a first half-cycle of a discharge

oscillation current wave form of one pulse in which polarity is reversed, together with at least one half-cycle subsequent to the first half-cycle, as has been stated above.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that the invention set forth in claim 1 cannot be anticipated by the cited Kawasuji patent, which makes no mention of the gist of the present invention. It is also clear that the present invention cannot be obvious in view of the cited Kawasuji reference. It is therefore respectfully submitted that claim 1 is allowable.

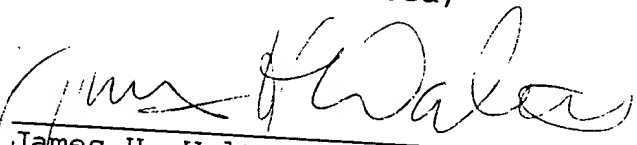
Claims 2 and 3 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Kawasuji in view of Hoffman et al (U.S. Patent 6,018,537). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Claims 2 and 3 are dependent from claim 1. [Neither of the cited Kawasuji reference nor the Hoffman et al reference mentions that the laser gas is continuously excited even during at least one half-cycle subsequent to the first half-cycle of the oscillating current to sustain the laser oscillating operation,] which is the gist of the present invention set forth in claim 1. Regarding claims 2 and 3, the present inventors conducted exhaustive studies to attain a novel and unobvious technique as stated above, and as a result, determined the characteristics of the electrical circuit components. Accordingly, it is clear that it would not be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art could to achieve the invention claimed in claims 2 and 3 of this application. These claims are therefore respectfully submitted to be allowable.

No amendment made was related to the statutory requirements of patentability unless expressly stated herein. No amendment made was for the purpose of narrowing the scope of any claim, unless applicant has argued herein that such amendment was made to distinguish over a particular reference or combination of references.

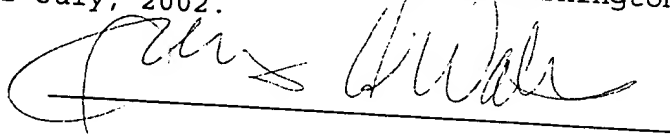
In light of the above noted amendments and remarks, this application is believed in condition for allowance and notice thereof is respectfully solicited. The Examiner is asked to contact applicants' attorney at 503-224-0115 if there are any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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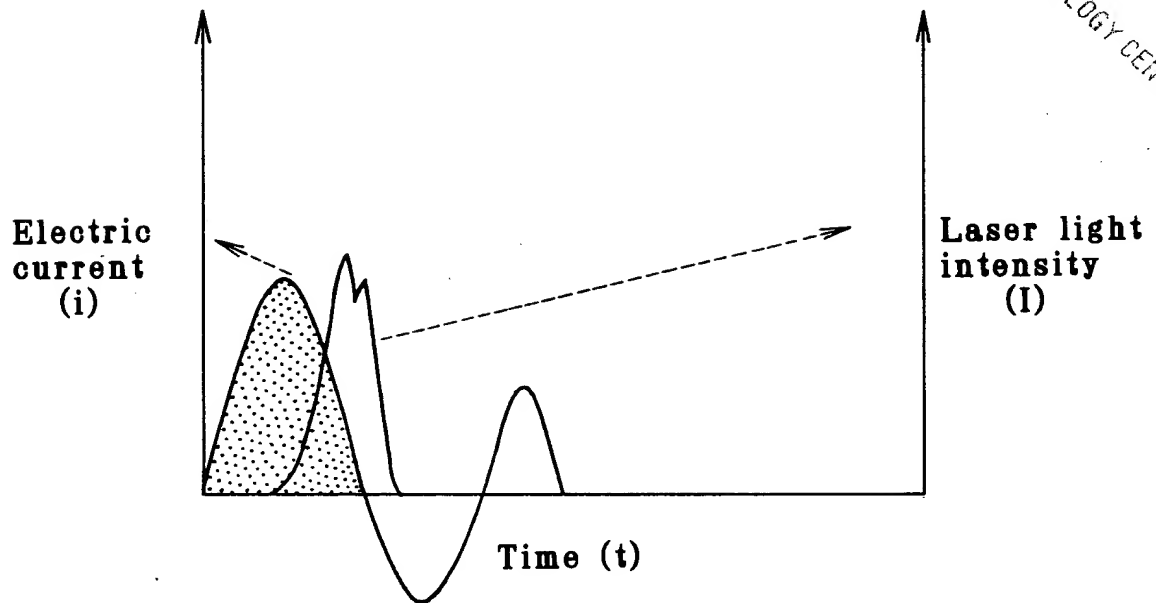
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**FIG. 8**  
Prior Art

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**FIG. 9**  
Prior Art

